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SUBJECT: SUBJECT: Afghanistan National Program of Peace and  
Reconciliation (AMPPR)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: At a May 30 meeting with Emboffs, Special President Advisor on Internal Security and Vice Chairman of the Demobilization and Reintegration Commission Mohammed Masoon Stanekzai outlined the main points of a proposal he has presented to President Karzai on reconciliation. The proposal suggests appointment by the President of a central coordinator, backed by a small secretariat, to orchestrate the activities of various government entities able to contribute to the reconciliation process. Stanekzai places considerable importance both on the Independent Directorate of Local Governance's governor-led reconciliation program (endorsed in our own new strategic approach) as well as on the mechanisms of the existing Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) program. He hopes his paper will be ready for sharing generally with international stakeholders within the next few weeks. Importantly, he calls for holding firm on loyalty to the existing constitution by reconcilees and strict avoidance of Swat Valley-type arrangements. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Background: To date there have been various strands to the reconciliation discussion but little coordination among these initiatives. At the highest, political level, Deputy National Security Advisor Spinzada has watched over the issue of outreach to top-level insurgent leaders and has ostensible oversight of the other efforts. That oversight appears to be loosely taken. The Peace Through Strength (PTS) program, headed by Upper House Speaker Mojaddedi, claims to have "reconciled" 7000 former lower-level insurgents, but few credit those numbers. The program has also had serious administrative problems (resulting in the withdrawal of U.S. funding) and its impact has been limited. Separately, Stanekzai's own Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) process has had some success (though likely not as much as is sometimes claimed) but has not been focused on insurgents. Early last year, reconciliation came in for discussion in several Policy Action Group (PAG) meetings, but National Security Advisor Rassoul ultimately terminated the PAG's involvement, indicating he preferred to see the issue handled internally, with a view to finding a way to coordinate all of the Afghan government elements potentially involved in reconciliation. Finally, late last year the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) began work on its own proposal for governor-led reconciliation at the provincial level. That program was specifically endorsed in our new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy.

¶3. (SBU) During a four-month stint last year with the U.S. Institute for Peace, Minister Stanekzai had time to give some thought to the problem and for the last two months has worked on a "framework" for an Afghan-led reconciliation process. At a May 30 meeting with Emboffs, Minister Stanekzai outlined the paper he has now presented to the President. He hopes to see his suggested approach approved soon. He believes it may be ripe for general consultation with international partners within about two weeks. He stresses that such an overall framework with broad buy-in from partners is essential if the Afghan government is to be able eventually to deal with the issue from a position of strength. Having everyone on the same sheet of music is also critical to improving Afghan and international strategic communications, where, Stanekzai believes, we have all been decidedly outmaneuvered by the

enemy.

¶4. (SBU) Stanekzai calls for the creation of a small unit answerable to the Palace, with an equally small Secretariat, to provide authoritative direction. A handful of internationals would also be involved to guarantee proper coordination regarding such issues as military targeting, intelligence agency seizures and 1267 blacklisting. Otherwise, his plan calls for using or retooling existing programs and mechanisms to do the actual work. He welcomes the IDLG's draft program, which envisions governors playing a major role in pursuing reconciliation. At the same time, Stanekzai believes the Afghanistan Public Protection Program (AP3) could be expanded to help provide greater community-level security for reconcilees; the mapping of opposition elements done by the DIAG process could be utilized and its regional offices and provincial committees possibly enlisted to act as the eyes and ears in the field of those coordinating reconciliation efforts from Kabul; and even MRRD's Community Development Councils and/or District Development Assemblies might be given a broader mandate to play a part.

¶5. (SBU) Stanekzai sees three general elements as essential for any viable reconciliation process. First, there must be true reintegration, meaning genuine post-reconciliation engagement with former fighters to give them the necessary support to provide them a genuine new start. Second, with the help of moderate mullahs, reconcilees must be put through a process of de-radicalization to overcome their entrenched mindset. Finally, there must be proper monitoring, something that has been markedly absent to date from the PTS process. For the International Community, the Minister foresees four contributions. First, we should work to align our messaging so as to speak with one voice on the reconciliation. Second, we should

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put pressure on insurgent sanctuaries, both diplomatically and militarily. Third, we should increase intelligence-sharing so Afghan and international forces have a common understanding of the insurgency. And fourth, we should provide Afghan authorities with material and technical help to provide the reintegration needed of the former insurgents.

¶6. (SBU) It is important to note that Stanekzai insists that our common red lines must remain intact as a guarantee against entering into Swat- or Musa Qala-like compromises that pose a threat to Afghanistan's nascent democracy. This includes loyalty to the existing constitution.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: We will continue to pursue our dialogue with Special Advisor Stanekzai and await with interest the eventual reaction of other international stakeholders to his full proposal, when it is distributed. Inasmuch as he calls largely for incorporating and adapting existing initiatives and mechanisms rather than creating something totally new, we judge his chance of success as fairly good inside the Palace and bureaucracy. Although Stanekzai himself appears intent on forging ahead as quickly as possible, launching a major new program - even one made up of existing elements - would likely be seen as politically motivated if done before the elections. For this reason, the proposal could well be on hold for the next couple of months.

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